

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DEBATE CONTINUES ON RESULTS OF QUITO OAS MEETING

REF: CARACAS 11294; CARACAS 11351

SUMMARY: PUBLIC DEBATE OVER THE GOV'S HANDLING OF THE CUBAN ISSUE AT QUITO CONTINUES. FOREIGN MINISTER SCHACHT HAS RESPONDED SHARPLY TO COPEI'S CRITICISM REGARDING THE RESULTS OF THE QUITO OAS MEETING. AD HAS ACCEPTED A CHALLENGE FROM EX-FOREIGN MINISTER CALVANI TO A TELEVISION DEBATE ON THE ISSUE. SCHACHT STATED ON NOVEMBER 19 THAT GOV IS STILL STUDYING QUESTION OF RECOGNITION OF CUBA AND WILL HAVE MORE TO SAY ON THE SUBJECT AT THE PROPER TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY NOVEMBER 17 SCHACHT REJECTED A PUBLIC CONFRONTATION OVER THE RESULTS OF THE QUITO MEETING. ALTHOUGH NOT MENTIONING COPEI BY NAME, HE SAID SOME CRITICS MOTIVATED BY SELF INTEREST AND CONVENIENCE WANTED TO DISTORT WHAT OCCURED AT QUITO WITH FALLACIES AND SOPHISMS. HE REMARKED THAT WHILE PARTIES IN OTHER COUNTRIES ARE UNITED AROUND THEIR GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY, IT WAS CURIOUS THAT PARTIES IN VENEZUELA ONLY ENGAGE IN

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SPECULATIVE THEORIZING. SCHACHT STATED THE FOREIGN MINISTRY

HAD ALREADY SAID PUBLICLY WHAT IT HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE QUITO MEETING. SCHACHT ADDED THAT THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM IS ANACHRONISTIC AND IS IN URGENT NEED OF REFORM. HE SAID THE SUBSTANTIVE JURIDICAL INSTITUTIONS, THE PROCEDURAL MECHANISMS, AND ABOVE ALL THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE OAS DO NOT CORRESPOND TO THE REALITIES OF PRESENT-DAY LATIN AMERICA.

2. RESPONDING TO A CHALLENGE BY EX-FOREIGN MINISTER CALVANI TO A TELEVISION DEBATE, AD SECRETARY GENERAL OCTAVIO LEPAGE SAID AD BELIEVED FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS SHOULD NOT BE THE SUBJECT OF PARTISAN STRUGGLES; THEREFORE SCHACHT WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN A CONFRONTATION WITH CALVANI. LEPAGE ADDED AD DID NOT WISH TO BE STINGY AND WOULD GIVE CALVANI "THE OPPORTUNITY HE IS LOOKING FOR TO GAIN POINTS WITHIN HIS PARTY AND IMPROVE HIS IMAGE." IF CALVANI WANTED A DEBATE, AND AD REPRESENTATIVE WOULD TAKE HIM ON. LEPAGE WENT ON TO SAY THAT, APART FROM THE NUMEROUS JOURNEYS TAKEN BY CALVANI, VENEZUELA'S FOREIGN POLICY DURING THE YEARS CALVANI WAS FOREIGN MINISTER WAS NOT DISTINGUISHED BY ANYTHING SPECIAL.

3. THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES CONTINUED ITS DEBATE NOVEMBER 18 OF THE GOV'S ROLE IN THE QUITO OAS MEETING. INDEPENDENT LEFTIST DEPUTY JOSE VICENTE RANGEL SAID HE BELIEVED WHAT HAPPENED AT QUITO WAS NEITHER A POLITICAL DEFEAT NOR A MORAL VICTORY, REFERRING TO THE STATEMENTS OF CALVANI AND SCHACHT. THE FAULT DID NOT LIE IN CONVENING THE QUITO MEETING, RANGEL SAID, BUT IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM ITSELF. HE ADDED THAT VENEZUELA'S PURCHASE OF CUBAN SUGAR LAST YEAR DID NOT VIOLATE ANY INTER-NATIONAL AGREEMENT BUT WAS ONLY AN EXERCISE OF ITS SOVEREIGNTY. AD SPOKESMAN LUIS ESTEBAN REY SAID THE DEBATE WAS STAGED AND UNNECESSARY. NEVERTHELESS HE SAID IT PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OUT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ASHAMED OF THE POSITION IT TOOK AT THE QUITO MEETING. REY FOLLOWED UP WITH A FULL DEFENSE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FOREIGN POLICY. (THE PRESS REPORTED NOVEMBER 19 THAT REY WOULD LIKELY BE AD'S REPRESENTATIVE IN THE TV DEBATE WITH CALVANI).

4. SCHACHT REPORTED ON THE QUITO MEETING AT NOVEMBER 19 MEETING
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OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. AFTERWARDS HE TOLD PRESS HIS REPORT HAD BEEN RECEIVED "FAVORABLY." ASKED WHETHER THE COUNCIL HAD CONSIDERED THE RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH CUBA, SCHACHT SAID, "NO CONCLUSION WAS REACHED ON THAT BECAUSE IT IS STILL BEING STUDIED. THE POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING RELATIONS WITH CUBA IS A SUBJECT THAT CONTINUES TO BE AN OBJECT OF THE MOST REFLECTIVE AND CALM STUDY ABOUT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE MORE TO

SAY AT THE PROPER TIME."

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